Friendship

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FRIENDSHIP

1

GO FORWARD

"...God within us is the force of life and the unquenchable light..."

In the duties to which you are bound, on many occasions, you feel the magnitude of the problems to be solved, and your heart overflows with tears. The apparent loneliness within seems to exaggerate the extent of the obstacles to be crossed.

And, measuring the high price of devotion within the family—mentalizing the hours spent building and rebuilding affections that flee in the chariot of time, surrendering to the ideals that cherish the days—you reflect upon the difficulties that renew themselves; upon the work, so often drenched in weeping, to which you give yourself in fulfillment of assumed duties; and upon the altered plans, in which you dreamed of the best only to achieve failure and a new beginning...

Nevertheless, rise from the ground of sadness, act in whatever good you can do, and walk forward. God within us is the force of life and the unquenchable light.

Difficult hearts to lead, domestic calvaries, harvests of hope, workshops of beneficence, and apostolates of good are tasks that Divine Wisdom could clearly execute without you; nonetheless, God desired your cooperation in the works of sublimation and progress, so that through this effort, you might develop your divine qualities.

No matter how distressing the circumstances, serve and go forward.

Wherever you are and however you are, remember that God counts on you, as much as you count on God.

GIVE THANKS

Give thanks for the hands that build your existence, decorating it with the colors of joy and hope; but address your thoughts of gratitude also to those others that wound you with the thorns of incomprehension, teaching you how to coexist and to serve.

Give thanks for the voices that cradle your yearnings, weaving hymns of peace and love that inspire your finest achievements; however, send your vibrations of recognition to those others that exaggerate this or that flaw, inducing you to understand and forgive.

Give thanks to the friends who provide you with a bountiful table, impelling you to think of the Earth's abundance; but do not refuse respect to those who, at some time, withheld bread from you, leading you to cherish fraternity and beneficence.

Give thanks to the brothers and sisters who recognize your nobility of feeling, praising your work; meanwhile, do not forget the esteem due to those others who disparage you, helping you to discover the treasures of humility and tolerance.

Once, a piece of carbon lost in a dung heap asked God to take it to the Earth's surface so it could be more useful. The Supreme Lord heard its plea and determined it should be held underground for due maturation. The humble mineral accepted the answer and remained in confinement for centuries upon centuries, enduring the chemistry of nature and the constant assault of the organisms inhabiting the soil.

Finally, the time came when the Creator commanded it be brought forth to fulfill its ideals. Drilling instruments exhumed it with merciless blows, and the lapidary cut its body in various ways through meticulous refinement.

But when the sublimated carbon fully emerged before the eyes of the world, God had transformed it into a diamond, which began to shine

among men, resembling a flower of the rainbow with the brilliance of the stars.

3

SOMEONE TODAY

...Organize your shelves of kindness and serve hope and courage to those who seek your support.

Someone today may still seek you out, asking for help. Someone who probably does not speak but will carry in their eyes or their very acts the plea for shelter that words do not always convey.

Someone who may have erred, pleading for a gesture of sympathy from you to rectify themselves; who finds themselves under the cold of anguish, begging for security; who may have lost unforgettable affections in the mist of death, imploring you for comfort; who suffers from loneliness, craving a few moments of companionship...

Do not declare yourself incapable, nor call yourself useless. Help however you can. Heaven will know how to use you.

Organize your shelves of kindness and serve hope and courage to those who seek your support. Offer yourself for the work of good, just as you find yourself and as you are, doing your best.

FEAR NOT. IF YOU DESIRE RENEWAL AND IF YOU HAVE FAITH, you can clearly assist your neighbor, collaborating in the "supermarket of light," delivering the blessings of God.

4

ALWAYS LOVE

"..Judgment belongs to men, but Justice belongs to God..."

You will perhaps find near you those who seem wrong to you. This one committed a certain fault; that one settled into a situation considered unfortunate. Respect the tribunal that indicated their treatment, without refusing them help.

Who can know all the circumstances to pass a definitive sentence regarding someone's attitudes, analyzing effects without penetrating the profound causes?

A certain young woman delighted in the perfume of the roses that bloomed at her window. Proud of the branches that climbed the walls to offer her flowers, she wished to "correct" the garden at the patch of ground where the plant rose. A small mound of fertilized earth, standing out from the level ground, was violently torn away—but it was precisely there that the heart of the rosebush throbbed.

Once the root was severed, the flowers died.

How many creatures are resigned to dwelling in situations categorized as "mud," so that the roses of joy and security may shine in the windows of our lives?

Accept others as they are. Wait and serve. Bless and always love. What is wrong today, in many cases, will be right tomorrow. Judgment belongs to men, but justice belongs to God.

5

EVALUATION

When you have overcome grave relationship problems within your circle of loved ones, do not dwell on the memory of the afflictions and tears that you may have carried within your own heart. Think of the assistance received from Benefactors of Greater Life who sustained you during the passage of unexpected disturbances.

When you emerged from this or that accident without fatal calamities, do not fixate on the memory of the difficult phases of such an event. Reflect on the aid of the Envoys of Good who managed to keep you safe from regrettable consequences.

When you overcame struggles and temptations that placed you at the doors of insanity or self-destruction, do not linger in the recollection of the facts that impelled you toward errors and hallucinations. Meditate on the dedication of the Spiritual Friends, residing in the Higher Plane, who prevented your fall into the precipices of shadow.

When you move through medical treatment for health compromised by a complex infirmity, do not crystallize yourself in the idea of disease and suffering. Imagine the generosity of the Messengers of Light who reduced your organic crises without you even noticing, succoring you both in medical assistance and in the affection of those who surround you, so that your existence on Earth might be extended with the opportunity to work.

Even in trials that you consider clearly unfortunate, do not nail yourself to thoughts of sadness or discouragement. Evaluate the blessings that remain in the balance of any occurrences and give thanks for the surplus of resources and advantages with which Divine Mercy favors you, in the certainty that the Emissaries of Heaven will help you recognize that God, in any situation and at any time, does what is best for us all.

6

ON THE PATH

Do not call yourself useless, nor flee from serving. God is the Supreme sun; nevertheless, you can perform the function of the humble candle when it becomes a small flame pushing away the darkness.

In God, eternal joy shines; but you possess the resources to be the smile that reanimates hope in discouraged hearts. God is wisdom; however, you hold the possibility of constructing the renewing phrase to aid brothers and sisters in despair. God is integral mercy; yet nothing prevents you from sustaining the forgiveness of offenses. God is all power; you, however, carry enough strength to provide this or that service in favor of someone.

Do not become entangled in the thicket of lost time. PROCEED by blessing and serving. Let us follow the light of good. God is infinite love; nevertheless, here and beyond, today and always, YOU CAN BE THE CRUMB.

7

THE PATH OF PEACE

They say that a man of faith approached Jesus and inquired, after expressing himself in manifestations of joy and reverence:

— Lord, where is the path of peace? What shall I do with my son who shatters my tranquility, mired in rebelliousness?

— You shall always bless him — replied the Divine Master — seeking to succor him with more love.

— And how should I act before my uncle, he who stole my grandparents' inheritance?

— You shall seek to forgive him, using compassion and forgetfulness.

— And my former partner? In what way should I proceed with this man who harmed and insulted me so much?

— You shall excuse him, praying in his favor.

— I have four ignorant employees... How can I harmonize with these "problem companions" if they afflict me with the greatest difficulties day by day?

— You shall know how to instruct them.

— My existence is full of persecutors... What should I do with these cruel people?

— You shall forget any grievance and help for the benefit of each one, as much as you can.

The devotee bowed his head, feeling himself in the presence of truth, and considered timidly:

„Lord, I am satisfied. It is said that Jesus stroked his aching head and concluded, upon bidding farewell:

— Then go, serve always, and ask no more.

8
COLLABORATE

Do not say that the obstacles are insurmountable or the burdens of the journey are too heavy to bear.

In the face of trials, collaborate with patience. In the face of offense, collaborate with forgiveness. In the face of ignorance, collaborate with instruction. In the face of darkness, collaborate with light.

Remember that Divine Providence does not expect you to perform the impossible, but it counts on your sincere cooperation in the small tasks of everyday life. To collaborate is to understand that we are all members of the same family, under the gaze of the same Father.

The Higher Spirits work tirelessly for the progress of humanity. When you offer your hands to the service of good, you become a living instrument of the Messengers of Light. Do not allow discouragement to paralyze your will.

Each gesture of kindness is a seed of happiness that you plant in the garden of your own destiny. Collaborate always. Serve with joy. And you will find, in the fulfillment of duty, the peace that the world cannot give.

COMPARISON

"...When you must ask why God would have created the shadows of night, think of the millions of stars that the darkness has unveiled to you..."

When you must pluck some THORN that the contact with the earth has imposed upon the epidermis of your soul, reflect on the incessant harvests of the flowers of joy that life offers you.

When you must remove some STONE from the road to be traveled, pause to count the kilometers of safe path upon which you transit.

When you must heal some moment of SADNESS, meditate on the hours of contentment and hope that nourish your days.

When you must ask why GOD would have created the shadows of night, think of the millions of stars that the darkness unveils to you.

When you must cross any DIFFICULTY in the world, sum up the blessings you already possess, and you will feel your heart immersed in the endless ocean of God's goodness.

A NOTE ON COURAGE

"...Courage is neither to retaliate nor to fall into the display of power. True courage rises from understanding and blessing when imbalance attempts to assault you..."

Do not distance yourself from patience when difficulties worsen. Even if unexpected trials strike your heart, preserve your serenity and go forward, acting and serving.

Think of those who lost their faith and stumbled into violence; meditate on those who fell into despair and slipped into madness.

The word that lashes you may be infirmity in the form of an insult, and the hand that strikes you is likely under the impulse of darkness.

Courage is not to retaliate, nor to fall into the display of power. True courage rises from understanding and blessing when imbalance attempts to assault you. In any circumstance, sustain yourself in the effort to safeguard the good.

When you are on the verge of pronouncing any unreflective phrase or undertaking the slightest action against others, pray and remain silent, for Heaven hears you and God will sustain you.

GOD ACTS

Heaven erases the unhappy hours... In the faith that already reaches you...

Difficulties and hindrances. Unbound afflictions. Unforeseen trials. Sadness and bitterness. Splinters of incomprehension. Mishaps and tears. Imminent disasters. Problems and conflicts...

When these shadows appear, PRAY AND REMAIN SILENT.

Preserving tolerance.

If possible, say nothing.

Serving for the good.

Without complaining about anyone.

Then, you will perceive that you find yourself in peace, and that a light is coming to the aid of everyone...

It shall always be so. Because, in all crises, Heaven erases the unhappy hours, and if you remain silent and wait, in the faith that already reaches you, with more immediate security, GOD REMAINS AT WORK.

UNFORESEEN DIALOGUE

"...Lord! Lord!... I have awaited this meeting for so long, and only today..."

The devotee, seeing Jesus in a dream, exclaimed perplexed: "Lord! Lord!... I have awaited this meeting for so long, and only today..."

The Eternal Benefactor made use of the pause and inquired: "How so, if even today you fled from me four times in your own home?" And before the astonished devotee, He commented gently:

"When you became angry with the grandfather who required more esteem from you; when you denied support to the prodigal brother who returned to seek you in penury; when you did not forgive the son who defied your points of view; and when you condemned the daughter who disregarded your name and advice—it was to me that you did it."

Before the Master, the moved believer observed: "Lord, what do You wish to say? In what lesson of Your goodness can I understand the teachings with which You seek my reasoning?"

"I remember having said," spoke Jesus, "that whatever blessing given by men to the least of these would always be done unto me..."

"Master," noted the devotee, "I have no 'little ones' at home..."

Jesus, however, stroke the hands of the friend who questioned and explained: "Yes, your grandfather, before the world, is a man of great possessions, wielding enormous influence; but within his heart, he is a boy hungry for attention, carrying money by God's permission. He has noble knowledge in the domain of brilliant words; however, in the recesses of himself, he is a child maladjusted in matters of affective impulses.

Your son is today a friend with a brain laureled by the sciences of the Earth; nonetheless, in the core of himself, he is a little one thirsty for faith

and security before the Laws of God. And your daughter, although a human creature, is still, inwardly, a true child in need of protection..."

"Lord! Lord!" Cried the believer, seeking to reach Jesus, whose figure was becoming distant.

It was then that the devotee awoke on a morning full of sun and began to think.

13

GUIDELINE

"...Place optimism and peace, hope and joy on your list of donations for today..."

Observe. Each morning is a new day. You have been reborn. You have emerged once more from the fog. God has renewed the thought in your quickened brain. You have resumed the presence of light.

Time belongs to you. You can think, create, analyze. You awoke alongside others. You have the gift of serving. Accept the blessing of understanding and the happiness of working.

Restart the task, imprinting a smile upon your pages of kindness. Place optimism and peace, hope and joy on your list of donations for today. Act now for the good.

If yesterday's sorrows still weigh upon your soul, seek to forget them. If you have offended someone, dispose yourself to heal the fault committed. If someone has hurt you, forgive, unconditionally.

Look at the scenes around you. Life seeks you. The workshop of opportunity opens its doors to you. Choose to do the best you can. Step out of yourself. And go forward to love, help, build, and understand, because God waits for you.

14

DIVINE FAVOR

Do not complain to God because difficulties populate your life. Certainly, God knows all the programs of action that structure your existence. The difficult relative, the home under trial, the arduous tasks, the quest for sympathy, the thorny relationship...

God could suppress all of this in a moment. However, without uncomprehending family members, you would not know love; without domestic obstacles, you would not acquire responsibility; by fleeing from the burdens of sacrifice, you would have no experience; far from the search for support, you would not practice fraternity; and by deserting team struggles, you would end up unaware of the value of cooperation.

...Be convinced that God can heal any concern, but He leaves to each of us the blessing of work, so that we may manage to emerge from naivety and inertia to be, one day, conscious collaborators of the Divine Wisdom that sustains Creation.

15

THE CHILD'S PRAYER TO MAN

"...Do not refuse me the benefits of school and work, nor induce me toward any idea of hatred and separation..."

You have built a new world, in which I may see myself in a better future. Help me to have joy within it. You gave me freedom. Teach me to be free while being happy.

You placed me at the center of culture, with access to the most advanced experiences. Guide my steps so that I do not feel imbalanced, and so that imbalance does not drive me mad.

You say that you defend me. Do not refuse me the benefits of school and work, nor induce me toward any idea of hatred and separation. You invented roads in the skies. Help me build paths where I can meet my neighbor in an environment of understanding and peace.

You created precious machines for my comfort. Teach me to direct them with love and responsibility so they do not crush me.

You developed progress and raised material greatness in every corner of the Earth, and I thank you for everything—you who welcome me with such affection and love—but I ask, with all the strength of my heart, that you do not distance me from God.

16

THE GOLDEN INSTANT

"...You may keep the certainty that, through the occurrences of work, God will come to your aid..."

When the situation reveals itself as difficult and your strengths seem exhausted...

When infirmity installs itself in your energies, like a shadow you cannot extinguish...

When discouragement seeks you, suggesting the abandonment of the duties you embraced...

When difficulties multiply, creating embarrassments and struggles...

When complications arise so great that the abandonment of your own charges appears to be the path to follow...

Then, you will have reached the golden instant for the testimony of your own faith, because by serving and acting amid weariness and tribulation, you may keep the certainty that, through the occurrences of work, God will come to your aid with unforeseen help and unexpected light.

17

PRAY AND TRUST

"...Pray in silence and trust in God, waiting for Divine Providence, because God has roads where the world has no paths..."

If one day you find yourself in situations so difficult that life seems like a prison without doors; under the siege of apparently unbeatable persecutors; suffering the conspiracy of domestic intrigues; in the web of *negative spiritual influence*; in the field of ailments considered irreversible; in the snare of passions that disturb your mind; under trials that lead you to desolation and discouragement; under the pressure of unhappy habits; in extreme penury, without work and means of survival; with a soul relegated to supreme abandonment; in the area of problems created by the beings you love most: do not despair.

Pray in silence and trust in God, waiting for Divine Providence, because God has roads where the world has no paths. This is why the storm may roar at night, but there are no forces on Earth that prevent the arrival of a new dawn each day.

18

PRAYER FOR HUMILITY

"...God of Mercy! If any success seeks me, let me perceive Your goodness over the weakness that I still see in myself.."

GOD of Mercy!...

Help me to preserve the yearning to find You. When there is turmoil around me, keep for me the inner silence in which I seek to hear Your voice.

If any success seeks me, let me perceive Your goodness over the weakness that I still see in myself.

Before others, grant, oh, Father, that I may mark Your infinite love, valuing my insignificance through those who grant me affection.

If adversaries appear in my path, make me see them as instruments of work among those with which You perfect me. In joy, induce me to discover Your paternal protection, stimulating me to move forward. In pain, strengthen my ears so they may listen to Your calls of peace.

And, the more I may know, in my unworthiness, the illuminated resources of the ocean of worlds and beings You built in the Universe, grant me, O God of Mercy, that I may have the simplicity of a drop of water which, though only an anonymous drop, feels tranquil and happy because it sees itself capable of reflecting Your light in the eternal brilliance of Creation.

THINK

"...Those who wound are truly wounded, and all the wounded are ill..."

You often recognize yourself in the world as one who sees themselves in a field of immense struggle. Duels between light and shadow. Antagonistic forces of good and evil. The angles of combat are on various fronts: radio, television, the press, homes, and squares.

You read the news about the man who extinguished the lives of loved ones, surrendering himself afterward to the webs of suicide. You saw the photo of another person responsible for robberies and aggressions. You studied the face of the woman who abandoned her child so as not to distance herself from adventure. You knew the drama of the rebellious youth who became an arsonist in the delusions of indiscipline. You recorded the sad occurrences triggered by those who slipped into delinquency, disturbed by *negative spiritual influence*.

Contemplate the areas of conflict and, while loving the dignity of good, do not censure the victims of evil, who are unhappy enough by themselves. Those who wound are the really wounded, and all the wounded are ill. Bless, relieve, restore, uplift.

Separate the infirmity from the infirm, as you assist the orange tree by freeing it from the invasive weed, and you will discover only a brother who weeps and suffers. Think of what Jesus would do if you saw Him in person on the soil of human life, observing those who faint. You would not hear any condemnatory phrase from Him. Surely, the Lord would lean over the fallen to succor them. And if you asked Him why He was acting so, He would answer without hesitation: "They are all mine."

20

PETITION

"...Lord! I perceive You in the culture of those who teach and in the intelligence of those who learn..."

Lord! I admire Your presence in every creature that crosses my path. I listen to Your manifestations when someone uses the word in the ponderation of maturity or in the simplicity of a child. I perceive You in the culture of those who teach and in the intelligence of those who learn. I feel Your marvelous love pulsing in every heart. I am moved by observing the devotion of all those who make themselves fathers and mothers in the world.

However, beyond all this, I recognize Your voice when You call me through those who suffer. I gaze upon You in the sick and the sad who extend their arms to me, pleading for help in Your name. I know the tears with which You speak to me of protection in the countenances of mothers relegated to abandonment. I understand You in the anxious gaze of brothers in maladjustment. I comprehend You in the requests for affection from children cast into the public streets. And I know how much You search for me in those who lose their balance in the shadows of ignorance or in the flames of delinquency.

I thank You for the happiness of identifying You in my companions of experience; nevertheless, I come to plead for the courage to be useful so that I may know how to answer Your call alongside those who weep: **"Lord, I am here."**

21

DIFFERENT TEACHERS

"...'When I saw the man who hated, attacked by madness, I discovered the path of love'..."

The guide who was explaining the lessons of Jesus spoke, concluding: "When I saw the man who hated attacked by madness, I discovered the path of love. Observing vengeful creatures, carrying the heavy chains of resentment, I found the lightness of forgiveness. Noting envious spirits in the torment of dissatisfaction, nourished by themselves, I learned to be content with what I must do the best of myself. And when I analyzed the tribulations that explode on the path of those who ally themselves with evil, I understood that I must seek peace and happiness on the road of the good..."

"Instructor," interrupted an apprentice, taking advantage of the wise commentator's longer pause, "you mean Jesus..."

And the guide concluded: "When Jesus recommended to us the prayer for all those who persecute and slander us, He was not only inducing us toward goodness but also inviting us to gratitude for the indirect support of these *different teachers* whom we do not always know how to thank."

22

THE ANSWER

"...'Daughter, only love can educate the children of God'..."

A desolate woman released herself from the Earth and found herself before Jesus, supplicating: — Lord, have compassion on me! The world torments me and life made me a slave... I have a son who incessantly wounds my heart... I awaited him with the best dreams; I cradled him in my arms... However, I find in him my torment. Why this, beloved Friend? Why so much suffering in exchange for such abnegation?

The Eternal Benefactor caressed her aching head and explained: — Daughter, only love can educate the children of God. What would become of the trunk if the earth did not support it, or of the nest if the branches did not safeguard its hope? — But, Lord, and what of me?!... Who would have placed such martyrdom in my arms? Who, perhaps by mistake, would have situated in my breast this difficult and indifferent son, believing that my love as an ignorant and fragile woman could manage to educate him?

It was then, with great surprise, that the poor mother heard from Jesus these simple words: — My daughter, it was me.

23

THE MACHINE'S PLEA TO MAN

"...Do not entrust me to unskilled hands so that I do not cause you suffering..."

You created me, in the name of God, to serve you. Use me with the reasoning in which you made me so that I do not lose balance. Depending on you in the exercise of my functions, do not leave me to lack of control. If I am to facilitate your activities and calculations, do not refuse me the assistance I need in order to move in your favor.

Assisting you at home, give me indispensable protection so that I may protect you. Called to spare your strength in the transport of specific loads, do not overload me with weight superior to my capacity for work, so that I do not impose unnecessary losses upon you.

When you use me for the conveyance of yourself, respect me within the conditions upon which you raised me, so that I may respect you, safeguarding your life. Do not entrust me to unskilled hands so that I do not cause you suffering.

I am a machine, a reflection of yourself. In obeying you, I can do nothing more than attending to your own thoughts. I respond to what you determine. I follow your impulses. Remember that I was born from your intelligence illuminated by Divine Wisdom and, for that very reason, although they consider me merely a machine, I too belong to God.

SEDATIVE

"...In every insecure situation, lean upon trust in GOD, supporting those who surround you..."

It is possible you find yourself under the influence of afflictive agitation. Pacify and serve. Wait and work. If difficulties frighten you, the hour of active faith has arrived, requiring more support from you in favor of others. If trials have collapsed upon the path, the moment of patience will have sounded.

Uncomprehending companions appeared... They will be in error. You saw uninformed brothers... They need fraternal assistance. Those others stand out who poison circumstances and people when their minds are immersed in imbalance... They are ill, awaiting medication.

In every insecure situation, lean upon trust in God, supporting those who surround you. And before all those who, perhaps, seek to take away your serenity, creating problems and conflicts, enroll yourself, in image, in your infirmary of silence, and offer them the sedative of prayer.